

GRIST FROM THE MILL FOR OUR VOLUNTEERS
COLVIN RUN MILL HISTORIC SITE
May 2004



Increase in Tour Prices

The Fairfax County Park Authority increased the cost of a tour of Colvin Run Mill beginning April 1. Adults will now pay \$5, children and seniors \$3, and students \$4. Fees for school groups will remain at \$3 per student, whether the school is in Fairfax County or not. We will review prices charged for special programs, but there will not be a wholesale change.



Time Travelers

Time Travelers are back. Children taking part in the Time Travelers Program, sponsored by the Virginia Association of Museums, pick up a passport at a participating museum or historic site – like Colvin Run Mill. They visit six sites in Virginia or D.C., getting their passport stamped at each one. Then they send the completed passport to VAM and receive an official Time Traveler Certificate. As a member of the program, we offer a \$1 discount on children's Time Traveler tours.



Field Trip to Md and Pa Saturday June 5

Spend the day exploring three very different mills in the countryside of Harford County, Md. and York County, Pa. We will leave Colvin Run Mill parking lot at 8:30am and head to **Eden Mill** (edenmill.org). After a tour of this early 1800s merchant mill, we will cross into southern York County, Pa. to see **Cross Mill**, a small country mill featured on page 78 of David Larkin's book *Mill*. Nearby, **Muddy Creek Forks Roller Mills** sits alongside the tracks of the Maryland and Pennsylvania (Ma & Pa) RR. The mill has been stabilized, cleaned and repaired with the goal of better understanding just what is there.

Check with Mary for more information or add your name to the sign-up sheet in the volunteer room.

Sad News

Mason Maddox's father-in-law, John Helmick, died on April 7. John was a carpenter and introduced Mason to the field of carpentry – his springboard into molinology. John often helped Mason on projects, working with him building decks for various people and generously sharing his knowledge and skills.



Tom Snyder also died on April 7. Tom volunteered at Colvin Run Mill for over 15 years, from 1985 to 2000. For Tom, each day was a new voyage of discovery and everyone – staff, other volunteers, and site visitors lucky enough to have a Tom tour -- was welcome along for the ride.

Raised on a farm, Tom had been the chief operator of a butter churn and knew how to shell corn, cure ham and convert a wagon into a portable blacksmith shop. An engineer, he could make a radio from a razor blade and some wire, and could explain the physics of ice cream making or the logic of using a prime number for the amount of gear teeth. Possessed of an insatiable intellect, he taught himself to blacksmith, sew shirts (with 2 pockets), cane chairs, arc weld, silk screen, fix antique cars and who knows what else. We were constantly learning of something else Tom could do and figured that the only things he couldn't do were the things he hadn't yet tried. Wherever we look on site, we see Tom's influence in the things he built for us and the knowledge he passed on to paid and volunteer staff. We all feel richer for knowing him.

The Miller's House

by Ann Korzeniewski

In April we embarked on a long-term project involving research, on-site sampling, and professional consultation and testing to discover and document architectural features in the c. 1811 miller's house. During the 1960s when the Fairfax County Park Authority began restoring the Colvin Run Mill Historic Site property, most of the effort went into restoring the mill and its machinery. During the next two to three years, we hope to learn more about how the house looked and functioned when it was new, and how its decoration and form changed over the 130 years it was home to the millers' families.



Before work can be done on furnishings or interpretive plans for the house, some basic research must be done to guide and inform these future plans. Part of that research will involve paint and plaster analysis. As recommended by Jeanne Niccols (manager of the Historic Artifact Collections Section), I contacted Frank Welsh of Welsh Color & Conservation, Inc. On April 15, Mr. Welsh visited the site and spent several hours talking with site staff about what outcome we wanted from a paint analysis project. He looked at the house in general and several architectural details specifically. He agreed with our decision to study the house as a whole over time, rather than just looking at the main "public" rooms for a particular period. While he was here, Mr. Welsh instructed site staff how to take paint and wood samples.

From this initial conversation, site staff is beginning an in-depth study of the house using primary sources (i.e., the house and its decorative details) to identify original materials and later alterations tracing the form and function of the structure through its years as a residence.

If you would like to see the notes from Mr. Welsh's visit, I would be happy to share them with you.



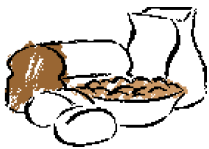
A Fortified Mill **by Jim Hogan**

Jim and Karen Hogan were intrigued by the fortified mill that they discovered at Leeds Castle in the United Kingdom. The mill is integrated into the barbican wall – the outer defense wall of the castle. The wheel once stood where the water is flowing. The structure was built by Odo, bishop of Bayeux, c.1100.

Odo was an interesting character. Among his other accomplishments were Canterbury Cathedral and the Bayeux Tapestry. Odo was half brother to

William the Bastard, subsequently known as William the Conqueror. He commanded the Norman center at Hastings in 1066. Being a man of the cloth, he was prohibited from the spilling of blood. He interpreted this rather loosely, though, by wielding a war club rather than a sword. Bashing skulls, in his view, was technically within the bounds of his Holy Orders.

Arti-Facts from Dawn **Out With the (C)old and in With the New!**



Just as warm breezes have replaced the winter chill, a new outreach exhibit, **Eat Healthy with Whole Grain**, will soon replace the current exhibit on winter activities in the Great Falls Library.

Eat Healthy with Whole Grain emphasizes that unrefined whole grains are not only healthy, but delicious. The exhibit features delectable-looking samples (both real and faux) of whole grain breads, crackers and pastry that can be made from the products ground at Colvin Run Mill and available in the general store. To emphasize the importance of whole grains, a poster of the USDA food pyramid showing grain products as the base of a healthy diet is included in the exhibit. Mason will be busy keeping up with the sure-to-follow demand for the whole-grain products of Colvin Run Mill.



From the Miller's Corner

Mason is grinding every Sunday and Kevin Gawthrop, Mason's dusty, is gradually taking on more milling responsibility under Mason's watchful eyes.

Mason says Kevin has a miller's ear. I think that means he can hear when the mill stones need attention, not that his ear is full of flour – although that may also be true.

Dawn Kehrer is ordering authentic period mill clothing for Kevin and Fred Pretty. Visitors will soon be able to associate the milling staff with the time frame that they are interpreting when the mill is operating.

On the Road with Bob and Marge

THE ABBOTT MILL AT MILFORD, DELAWARE

This mill is located on SR 442 and SR 620 in Milford, Delaware. This is a three story frame structure that has been painted a beige color with a green trim.

In 1795 Nathan Wiley, a carpenter, bought the land. In 1802 he petitioned the court to build a gristmill near Milford. Nathan died in 1812 and at this time the mill was sold to James Owen. Sometime later Isaac Riggs was the owner. The Johnson family owned and operated the mill from 1821 to 1874. At this time the mill was known as the Johnson's Mill. Ainsworth Abbott bought the mill property in 1919. Ainsworth operated the mill until 1960. The mill could produce twelve barrels of flour each day. Besides the production of flour, the mill shelled corn, crushed corn, graded corn and made livestock feed. Abbott used the "three break method" of milling.

The mill has millstones and also roller machinery. A water turbine furnishes the power to the mill. Originally the mill had an overshot water wheel. Inside the mill today is a steam engine. The milling equipment is intact, including grain elevators. This is an Oliver Evan's designed mill. There is a large millpond called Abbotts Pond.

In 1963 the State of Delaware purchased the mill. Renovations were done by the State Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs. The mill grinds during the summer months Mondays through Friday.